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Islamic Calligraphy

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Islamic Calligraphy

Because the Islamic faith prohibits the pictorial representation of the created world, calligraphy has long been an important art form among those who adhere to Islam. Islamic calligraphy then employs the Arabic script, which is comprised of twenty-eight letters, as well as a number of diacritical marks. This art form was originally conceived to preserve the Qur'an, the Muslim Holy book.

Islamic calligraphy has since evolved into eighteen different forms of writing. The most common styles are Kufic, Naskh, Riq'a, Thuluth, Persian, Taliq, and Nastaliq. Kufic is very angular, and is composed of squares and horizontal strokes. Naskh consists of rounded letters and thin lines. Riq'a and Naskh make up most of all printed material in Arabic.

Thuluth was introduced in the 13th century. The name indicates that 1/3 of the letter slides downward below the line, thus displaying ample curves. Persian, Taliq, and Nastaliq styles are characterized by strong cursive with exaggerated long horizontal strokes.

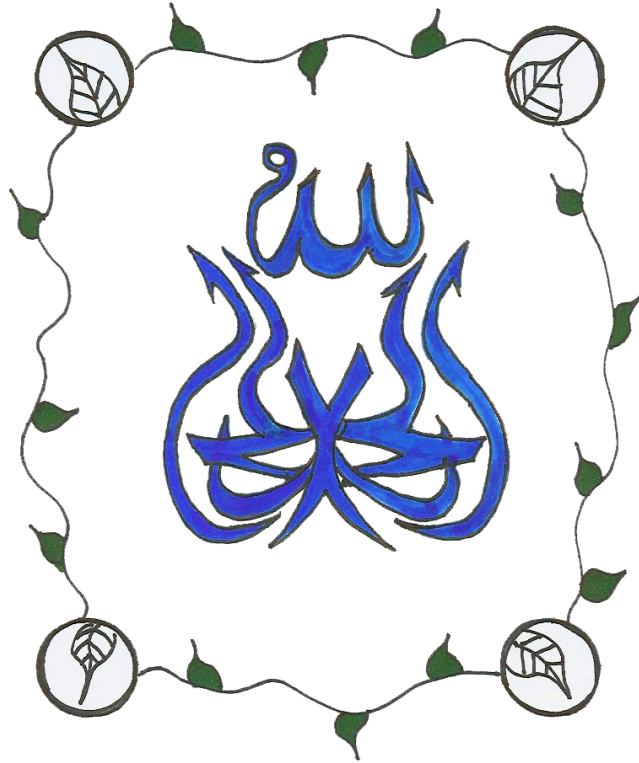
The style of Diwani was developed in the 16th century by Housam Roumi and reached its peak under the reign of Suleyman 1st (the Magnificent). This form of script writing was used for both decorative and communicative purposes.

Calligraphy, along with the art of mosaic, is still used to decorate mosques, shrines, courtyards and houses. The first were the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque were constructed between 687 and 691 CE by the 9th Umayyad caliph.

The most commonly reproduced phrases are "Bismi Allah al-Rahman al-Raheem," "al-hamdu lillah," Muhammad Rsul Allah," "La ilaaha illa Allah." Their respective meanings are: "In the name of God, the most merciful most gracious," "all praise be to the God," "Mohammad is the Prophet of God" and "there is no God but He."

Each calligrapher developed his own style. By interweaving written words these artists were able to produce anthropomorphic figures such as praying figures. Other shapes include elephants, ships, mosques and geometric patterns.

Sadika Ramahi



Praise Be To God

by Meleni Butcher



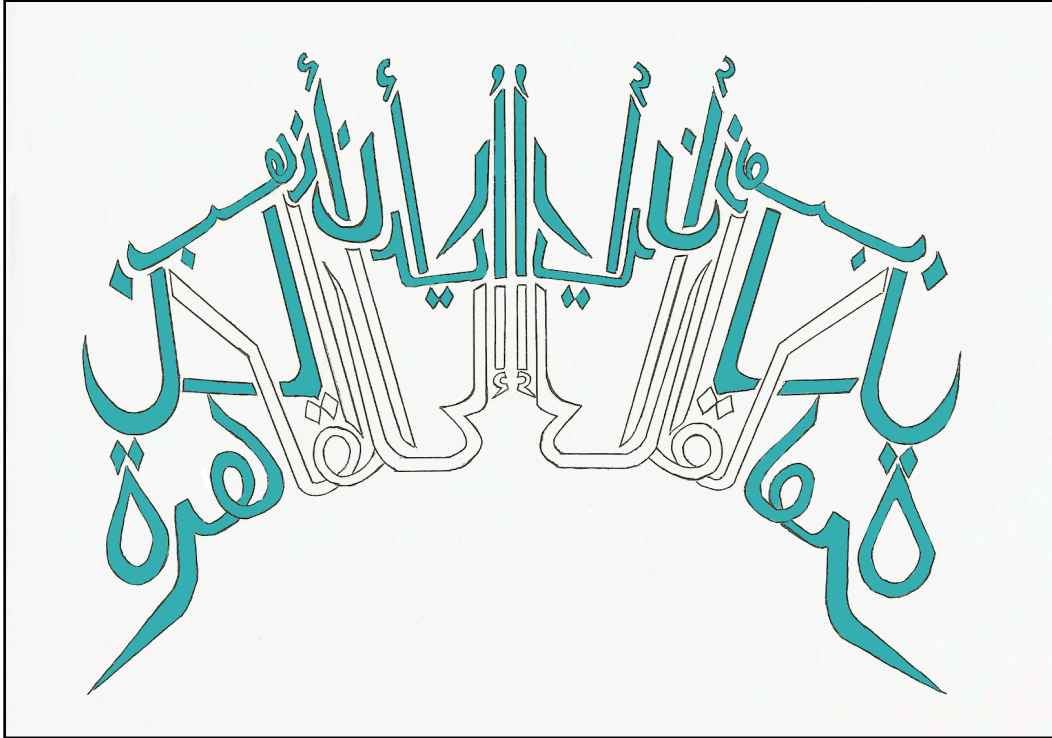
A Greeting: "Consider Us Your Family & This Your Home."

by Sadika Ramahi



Seek Knowledge

by Jenny Cunningham



I Want to Go to Cairo

by Patrick Hamilton



Balance

by Sadika Ramahi